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## Image, institution and leadership : Philip Lindsley and the modern university presidency 1825-1850

DAVID MATHIS

*College of William & Mary - School of Education*

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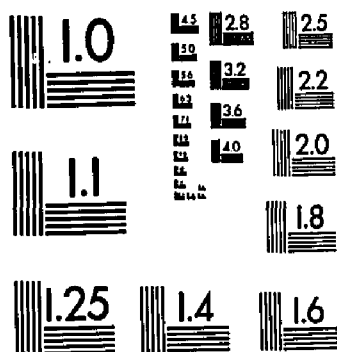
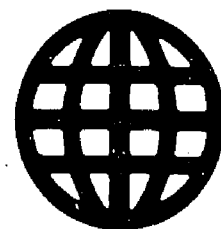
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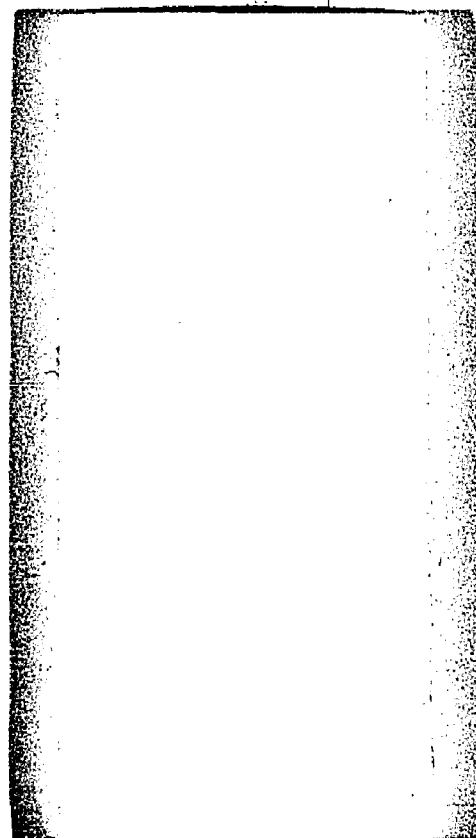
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**IMAGE, INSTITUTION, AND LEADERSHIP: PHILIP LINDSLEY AND THE  
MODERN UNIVERSITY PRESIDENCY, 1825-1850**

*The College of William and Mary in Virginia*

Ed.D. 1985

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PHILIP LINDSLEY AND THE MODERN UNIVERSITY PRESIDENCY,  
1825-1850

A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

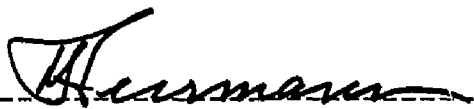
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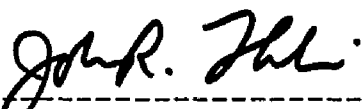
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by  
David Mathis

Approved December 1985 by

  
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Donald J. Herrmann, Ph.D.

  
-----  
James M. Yankovich, Ed.D.

  
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John R. Thelin, Ph.D.  
Chairman, Doctoral Committee

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There has always been great concern, if not preoccupation, with the projected character, image, prestige, reputation of a given college or university. Consequently, much has been written on various techniques to improve on this seemingly intangible quality. Yet, social research's capacity to identify the character of an organization has not surpassed statements of conventional wisdom.

An early form of institutional prestige was evident in the Medieval university in that after earning the master's or doctor's degree, students were entitled to teach anywhere. As a result, the older and more established universities held the greatest appeal for students as the names of these institutions were recognized anywhere. Younger, less established universities overcame their disadvantage by obtaining charters from sovereigns, thereby attaining a form of universal respect for themselves and the degrees they granted (Haskins, 1957, p. 33).

Even more than in medieval times, the importance of what various publics think of a given college or university is a chronic concern to today's educators. Talcott Parsons

suggests that organizations can be described and analyzed through the values of the organization and how these are reflected in its structure and functioning -- its character (1956, p. 57). Philip Selznick defines "character" as the distinctive competence or inadequacy that an organization has acquired. This institutional character is based upon the various commitments that have been accepted by the organization while adapting to internal and external pressures (1959, pp. 42-46).

The attempts to capture the essence of institutional character continue with what seems little more than a collective acceptance that indeed there is something to the notion of uniqueness of character. Huston Smith comments: (1955, p. 189)

A college is more than a factory for producing graduates. Any college worthy of the name will have a spiritual life of its own which makes of it more than an assemblage of teachers, students, and buildings. At best it will have an atmosphere which is felt to be different from other environments the moment one steps into it and which acts as a powerful developing force upon all who live within it. Such an atmosphere will be like mist in the sense that one cannot put one's finger on it, but no one should be able to stay in it long without becoming thoroughly soaked.

Eugene Fram sees this mist-like atmosphere as essentially the institutional image, which is grounded in the institutional character. Unlike the character, which is often relative to the various demands, commitments, and

pressures of the many publics, the institutional image is an emotional response to what people believe -- as opposed to what may be reality. Related to this belief is the fact that images are over-simplifications in the public's mind. These over-simplifications are based on filtered messages and perceptions. When a series of these over-simplifications occur, a Gestalt view or opinion results that relates to the institution as a whole which actually is attributable to segments thereof. In the case of a college or university, an institutional Gestalt may be built around the physical campus setting, the recognized strength (or weakness) of a particular part of the institution, or the charisma of the president or major spokesperson.

David Garvin goes a step further: "An institution's actual quality is often less important than its prestige, or reputation for quality, because it is the university's perceived excellence which, in fact, guides the decision of prospective students and scholars. . . ." (Fram, 1982, p. 6).

But what role does the president play in directing the public perception of institutional quality? As the chief marketing officer for the university, the president is also the chief prolocutor -- not only for the university but also for his or her own educational views. As a public figure and as a representative of the university, these views demand at least some degree of attention. It is oftentimes

this rhetoric that pays significant and direct contributions to the university; other times it serves more toward espousing the institutional saga but without discernible evidence of specific institutional benefit.

One important historic case of the spokesman's role in higher education is that of Philip B. Lindsley, educator and Presbyterian clergyman, who accepted the presidency of Cumberland College in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1824. He is, in effect, the nineteenth century precursor of the twentieth century university president. While himself a faculty member at his institution and one who was keenly interested in the academic development of the curriculum, Lindsley spent much of his time and energy addressing the external affairs of the university. He solicited monetary support as frequently as he called on Nashville and all of Tennessee to support his plans for the institution. He recognized the power of the press in influencing public policy just as he understood that higher education is not an isolated entity but instead one that must fit within the overall needs of society -- economically, socially, educationally, and morally.

Lindsley had already developed a reputation as a leader in higher education as evidenced by his being twice offered, at the age of 31, the presidency of Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky -- at the time on its way to becoming



one of the largest institutions of higher learning in the United States. Instead, he became vice-president at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) and shortly thereafter served for one year as acting president. He was also to be offered and to refuse, a first time, the presidency of Cumberland College; also of Ohio University at Athens and of Dickinson College.

Of these schools, some of them flourishing institutions, he selected Cumberland, which was to become in 1826 the University of Nashville and where he would serve as president until 1850. Here is the first part of the Lindsley puzzle: why did he give up the security of the East to take charge of a struggling school with only 30 students in a city of 4,000 inhabitants and 500 buildings? It is fact that when offered the presidency of the College of New Jersey, he had wanted the unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees; he did not receive such a commitment to his leadership and educational views, which were already being construed as liberal. But as for his specific reasons for making the move west, this ambitious, able educator was satisfied to explain: "Providence has destined me for the West" (Halsey, I, 1866, p. 23).

Burton Clark would speculate that such a charismatic authority as Lindsley was demanded by the struggling Cumberland College. By definition, Clark points out in his

The Distinctive College, that charisma is a function not only of personal style and force, but also of the views of subordinates (followers) and of the situation within the organization. The unsuccessful or problematic organization is willing, if not eager, to attribute charisma to a leader who promises change. "Decline spells crisis, and crisis shows the regular agents of the situation directly that they and their methods are now incompetent, that despite all wishes and intentions, the past is not an adequate guide for the future. Crisis calls out for charisma because old rules do not work and someone must try to devise new patterns" (Clark, 1970, p. 242). Likewise, the individual with charismatic personal qualities searches for a situation in which to display those traits and, in essence, to act out the great man theory wherein the institution becomes a lengthened shadow of the leader. "Therefore, the personality of an individual is the ultimate factor in institution-building; the key to success is to find the strong leader" (Clark, 1970, p. 240).

Lindsley was also aware of the need for higher education in the area: "Throughout the immense valley of the Lower Mississippi, there exists not a single college." He deemed Nashville, which had not then even been selected as the state capital, the ideal location for his dream of a great regional university.

According to historian Merle Borrowman's "The False Dawn of the State University" (1961), Lindsley's vision of a great secular, comprehensive university in Nashville was an institutional idea ahead of its time. The institutional plan was logical -- but, unfortunately, a culture plays by its own rules, which may or may not make sense to the rational analyst. The social and historical fact is that although American popular culture of the early nineteenth century needed a curriculum that was practical and modern and secular, the regional culture of the American West and South wanted institutions -- "colleges" -- that indulged their numerous respective denominational affiliations.

Yet, this dissertation adds another dimension to this episode of a false start for the modern university. Lindsley stood not only as the leader of an institution ahead of its time, but also as a college president ahead of his time. The archetypical college president of the early nineteenth century has been depicted by Hofstadter and Metzger as one with local orientation, usually a clergyman as well as a scholar; the "old time college president" tended the numerous affairs of a small, beleaguered campus that had little in physical plant, admissions standards, or endowment. It had a local and provincial orientation with a precarious existence. Lindsley stands in dramatic relief to this norm.

Decades before the graphics revolution's transformation of mass publications and a century before the electronics boom in media, Lindsley understood well the power of the press. In an age that understood local oratory but not the national press conference, Lindsley used the provincial base of Nashville as a curious and effective platform from which to seize the national imagination of the intelligentsia, the influentials of education. His tools were the speech, the essay, the article. It was a campaign that coincided only in part with his actual work as administrator and president.

That this Easterner chose this place at this time for the development of a nonsectarian college is significant. For the next 25 years Philip Lindsley would bring, almost with the enthusiasm of a missionary, higher education to the people of Tennessee. But his legacy is not in his own institution which "fell afoul of sectionalism, slavery, the tragic multiplication of colleges, and denominational rivalry of the time" (Woolverton, 1960, p. 22). Instead, the significance of Philip Lindsley is in the themes he addressed, through public speeches and published papers, regarding the direction of higher education in Tennessee and throughout the United States. Were this merely a success story of institution-building, Lindsley might dwindle in significance. The irony is that in this frontier environment, where the impossible was thought only slightly

less attainable than the difficult, Philip Lindsley confused the visionary with the real and turned his dreams into illusions. And herein lies his importance as a "type" and "role" for the American college president.

The young, charismatic, utopian reformer became something of a celebrity in the educational arena of his day through the distribution and publication of his educational thoughts and ideals. He understood well the potential import of media and publicity before the graphics revolution of the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These dreams became his legacy; his reality was the failure to execute these goals at his laboratory institution through his "Grand Experiment" for the regional university in the Old West. To illustrate this curious legacy, one might consider the attention afforded Lindsley's writings and polemics in the classic anthology on American higher education edited by R. Hofstadter and W. Smith, American Higher Education: A Documentary History. Lindsley, a failure of sorts at his home-base campus, stands larger than life with Andrew White, Francis Wayland, Charles Eliot, and Abraham Flexner in the pantheon of higher education literature. He emerges as the history of higher education's "beautiful loser" -- charismatic, quotable, but whose own institution dwindles as a forgotten venture, an idea ahead of its time. After serving as president of the University of

Nashville for 25 years, Lindsley resigned in apparent frustration in 1850, his liberal arts institution ending at the same time. But his professional inscription continued and stood separate from the institution where he was president. He had become a symbol of educational leadership through the celebration of his philosophies, his creeds. These creeds gained a favorable reputation and prestige for the man while having limited bearing on his institution. After a while and with his repeated oratory, Lindsley's reputation gained increased acceptance merely because of his recognition. Image and institution ceased to be one.

#### The Research Questions

Historically, the role of a major spokesman for higher education was to manipulate the public's perception toward a favorable image of the institution by utilizing concepts of iconography and practices in the theory of "pseudo-events." In the case of Philip Lindsley, president of the University of Nashville from 1825-1850, the contribution lay as much in what he promised he would do and what he said he was doing as in his actual accomplishments.

1. Given that educational historians refer to Lindsley's published papers as the primary source of his educational philosophies, how did he influence his standing in history by selecting what would become the only readily available resource to his educational contribution while providing scant mention of the impact of these ideals?

2. Given the range of the Lindsley educational concerns, did he serve more as an educational spokesperson than as an educational leader?

3. Which of his views were implemented with reasonable success at the University of Nashville?

4. How have historians treated the man and his philosophies apart from the University of Nashville's successes and failures?

5. After the failure of the "Grand Experiment," did the tone of the Lindsley message continue in the same manner?

6. What indication, if any, does Lindsley offer of acceptance of any of his recommendations and pleas for support?

7. Has a level of prominence been awarded this man that is not established even in his own papers?

8. Is there any indication that Lindsley attempted to stage his public discourses in such a manner as to reinforce his meaning by repetitious bombardment of the public with ideas encapsulated in a consistent form so as to give an after-life to his ideals?

9. In making his public addresses, did Lindsley fail to present himself as a safe and trusted figure linked to a comfortable, sound past leading toward an unthreatening future?

10. Was there any point in his public addresses at which his emphasis seemed to change from the University of Nashville to the perpetuation of his own image via his educational philosophies?

#### Terms

Prestige: Originally this word meant deceit or illusion with "prestigious" being synonymous with cheating. The word had an unfavorable meaning only until it became Americanized, thereby referring to the projection of and appeal for a favorable public image.

Image: Images become pseudo-ideals and therefore are synthetic, believable, passive vivid, simplified, and ambiguous.



Icon: Icons are special images or objects asserted to be extraordinary because they embody important values. They represent the craving for external expressions of internal convictions.

Artifact: An admired representation of history, an artifact can be intangible as well as tangible.

Pseudo-event: A planned (not spontaneous) happening for the immediate purpose of being reported with an ambiguous relationship to the reality of the situation and the intent to be a self-fulfilling prophecy (Boorstin, 1962).

## Historical Documents and Primary Sources

The most significant resource for the study of Philip Lindsley is the three volume collection The Works of Philip Lindsley, D.D. edited by Le Roy J. Halsey. Of the three volumes, Volume I, Educational Discourses is the most important for this study, even though the other two volumes have significant contributions to make. Volume I provides a chronicle of Lindsley's speeches (the inaugural address, commencement and baccalaureate addresses, and other selected lectures or notes for speeches). The editor provided unedited manuscripts for inclusion in the volume even though a selection process was undertaken of the complete Lindsley works.

Separate attention should be given the "Introduction to Vol. I., A Sketch of the Author's Educational Labours." The 52-page memorial by Halsey contains an overview of Lindsley's life (originally published in Henry Barnard's American Journal of Education) that is proudly biased. Yet, both the Sketch and the Works are often utilized as the primary documents on the philosophies and the life of Lindsley and serve, for the purposes of this study, to demonstrate how an individual can be treated by historians in their own era, which then influences future analysis.

Numerous other articles on the man and his dreams -- as opposed to his accomplishments at the University of Nashville -- appear in scholarly journals. Many of these refer to the Works, some even to the Sketch. Each takes a look at the man through his own public utterances.

Focusing more on the institution than on its president is a dissertation written in 1960 at George Peabody College for Teachers. The two volume work is intended to be the definitive history of the University of Nashville and does achieve a vast amount of intricate detail. What it does not undertake fully is an analysis of that detail. All resources for the 1960 study are still available.

## PROCEDURE

### Conceptual Framework

The premise for this study is that American institutions of higher learning are special places that have institutional characters formulated, in part, by custom. This custom, often based on a blending of history and legend, forms an institutional saga on which attempts are made to generate a distinctive reputation in the eyes of the external public (Clark, 1970).

In this evasive search for prestige, institutions attempt to package themselves in a unique fashion in relation to their major competitors. If the institution does not have a ready lore or tradition on which to build a favorable reputation, it must rely on the creation or perpetuation of an image or element within its reach. This can be either a natural evolution or a manufactured element, but the important thing is that a packaged product be established and projected. Once the projected symbol, liturgy, or calculated history is in place, the image that this artifact projects gains importance merely because it seems to embody important values. Once accepted, these icons and their unexamined philosophies grow into aphorisms and are elevated to truths that are then enshrined in the institutional personality. A cult evolves around the new image but does not examine it closely or even rationally.

Therefore, what was originally a contrived happening takes on an importance of its own -- in many cases greater than that of the original happening or element. These shadow effects redefine and elevate the significance of the actual event or artifact. If successful, the pseudo-event produces a package and contrived image to which the public can react. As time goes on, the impression of the image can be manipulated and enhanced to the degree that opinion is then being founded on second or third generations of

perception. The image, by then, is accepted; the prestige of the situation, person, or institution is determined.

One projected vehicle for acquiring image could be the major spokesman for the university. This person's views take on the same dimensions of importance as the artifact mentioned above. Yet, a potential disadvantage to any pseudo-event or icon is that its importance becomes attributed solely to itself with little benefit to the sponsoring institution. Unless a manipulation occurs to force a connection between the two, the symbol continues to thrive on its own, thereby perpetuating its own cult, legend, and saga.

### Research Design

By examining the rhetoric, ideas, and dreams of Philip Lindsley through the concepts in iconography and the theories of pseudo-events, I intend to provide support for the major research question and the supporting ten questions.

The works on which I focus primarily are Halsey's The Works of Philip Lindsley, D.D., assorted journal articles on and references to Lindsley in The Tennessee Historical Quarterly, The Peabody Journal of Education, as well as references to Lindsley in Pomfret's The Lives of Eighteen

from Princeton, Sloan's The Scottish Enlightenment and the American College Ideal, Schmidt's The Liberal Arts College, Butt's A History of Education in American Culture, Cremin's American Education, and Rudolph's The American College and University. I am indebted to Kenimer Houze Morgan for his 1960 dissertation, "The University of Nashville, 1825-1850." The University of Nashville records, available at Vanderbilt University's Education Library and the Tennessee State Library and Archives, are also consulted.

Conceptual references are drawn from Boorstin's The Image, A Guide of Pseudo-Events in America, Clark's The Distinctive College: Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore, Clark's "Belief and Loyalty in College Organization," Fram's "Maintaining and Enhancing a College or University Image," Browne and Fishwick's Icons of America, and Thelin's Higher Education and Its Useful Past and The Cultivation of Ivy, A Saga of the College in America.

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## CHAPTER II

### PHILIP LINDSLEY, EDUCATOR AND CLERGYMAN

The life of Philip B. Lindsley can be traced from either of two perspectives, that of a university president and leader in higher education and that of a Presbyterian theologian. While relatively clear lines can be drawn in his career between the two segments, it is wise to retain the dualism in mind when reviewing the man's path as an educator during his 25 years in Tennessee as president of the University of Nashville. During this period he was, in his most publicly held role, an educational leader -- a role which began in New Jersey prior to the Tennessee experience and continued in Indiana after leaving his beloved University of Nashville. But even in these early and late developmental stages of his life, Lindsley was to mix, to a degree, education and theology.

Educated at the College of New Jersey (later, Princeton University) and graduating in 1804, Lindsley taught school in Morristown, New Jersey, and at Mr. Finley's School before returning to the college in 1807 as a junior tutor and studying theology, primarily under the direction of President Samuel Stanhope Smith. He was licensed to preach in 1810 by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and continued

studying theology for the next two years, preached at various churches, and studied theology under Rev. Matthew La Rue Perrine.

In 1812 he returned to Princeton as a senior tutor, the following year becoming professor of languages and later also serving as librarian. In 1812 he married Margaret Elizabeth Lawrence, the daughter of the attorney-general of New York. It was in his role as librarian that he took pride in acquiring the best editions of the classical authors and served as "inspector" of the college, the equivalent of a present day dean.

In 1817 Philip Lindsley's career took on a formalization of his dual vocations. That year in June he was ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick and also became vice-president of Princeton. He was then 26 years of age. He would not accept the presidency of Cumberland College (later, the University of Nashville) until he was 38. That was also the year that he would be offered the first of several presidencies, this one at Transylvania University, an institution that was to become an important example of what higher education could do: free itself from sectarianism, attract public and private funding, conduct research, and recognize the importance of community good will.

The most informative account of the young Lindsley was recorded by President John Maclean of Princeton shortly before Lindsley's death in 1855. Maclean remembered Lindsley as being a popular teacher primarily because of his enthusiasm for his subject and the thoroughness of his teaching. Lindsley insisted on accuracy in the meaning and use of words as the surest way to appreciate the classical authors. Of these authors his favorites were Homer, Aristotle, and Longinus, "all of whom had a profound influence upon his literary style" (Pomfret, 1946, p. 161).

Even though Lindsley's published papers exceed 2,500 pages, his biographer, Le Roy J. Halsey, suggests that these made less of an impression on Tennesseans than did the Lindsley skill in oratory. The public Lindsley spent much time preparing his annual baccalaureate addresses, which after their presentation, were published and widely read. The usual message concerned his favorite topics of education and religion, although government and economics were also covered.

The young Lindsley practiced his public speaking during his Princeton days. His two 1822 chapel sermons on the "Improvement of Time" were published. "He was inclined to be pragmatic in his utterances, and possessed in a high degree the traditional Princeton virtues of directness and simplicity in his presentation. His point of view was that

of a layman rather than that of a minister; he was reverent and highminded, but more mundane and broad-minded than most of his contemporaries in the pulpit" (Pomfret, p. 162). Throughout his career Lindsley would commit his sermons and addresses to writing rather than risk speaking extemporaneously.

Lindsley became Dr. Lindsley in 1822, Dickinson College conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. This was also the year in which he would refuse a first time the presidency of Princeton. After a second offer of the position, he once again refused, with his term as acting president coming to an end in August 1823. He had wanted the unanimous vote of support from the Princeton Board of Trustees and on the first offer did not receive such; on the second he did, but he was not then an active candidate for the position.

Within the next two years he would be offered presidential posts at Cumberland College, Ohio University, and Dickinson College. He finally decided upon Cumberland where he arrived the day before Christmas 1824. He would devote the next 26 years of his life to this institution in the Old Southwest even though he would be called to head Washington College in Virginia, the University of Alabama, and the University of Pennsylvania.

What Lindsley found in Tennessee was a frontier society but one placing at least slight importance on his two interests, education and religion. The latter greatly influenced the former: "Possibly the most all-pervading single factor pushing men and women of little means toward literacy was God. The average Protestant looked upon the reading of the Bible as a duty, less to God than to himself" (Arnow, 1963, p. 170). Yet, there was also another pressing need for literacy -- the need to transact business, if for no other reason than not to be cheated in business by those who could read, write, and cipher.

There were other influences upon this society on the Cumberland where Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians reigned supreme. As in any developing society, the Tennessee Cumberland looked toward more established societies for social and educational patterns. Where they looked was toward Tidewater and its aristocratic families. In turn, Tidewater looked toward England. In regards, then, to higher education the universities of Cambridge and Oxford were seen as ideals. But these institutions did not concern themselves with the turning out of physicians, ministers, or lawyers; they were instead concerned with classical scholarship. So even though the decision-makers of Tidewater, and therefore the Cumberland, admired English higher education, it was the more pragmatic approach found

in Scotland -- particularly Edinburgh -- that was transplanted to America. This was especially true of Princeton which graduated most of Tennessee's most important early educators who were also Presbyterian ministers. In these aspects Philip B. Lindsley found a home in the Old Southwest (Arnow, p. 171).

He had, after all, been mentored by Samuel Stanhope Smith at Princeton, John Witherspoon's successor and a follower of the arguments of contemporary Scottish common-sense realism. Smith exerted a profound intellectual influence on Lindsley's and following generations and made this Scottish philosophy "the most significant school of systematic philosophy to appear in the United States between the Revolution and the Civil War" (Cremin, 1980, p. 24). Smith, whose students were among the foremost administrators of the early 1800s -- including Lindsley, Frederick Beasley of the University of Pennsylvania, and Joseph Caldwell of the University of North Carolina -- played a significant part in higher education's heritage. He echoed rhetoric about education and liberty and presented powerful arguments for the advancement of sciences such as physics and chemistry. He saw education as the enterprise par excellence for the creation of the human personality and national character. As such, he pushed for a general educational experience for the entire citizenry, an



experience that would allow for the study of the "sublime sciences" and the "liberal arts." Princeton was to be the example for all to follow. But this example of God-fearing theology of Calvinism and the human-centered theology of Scottish realism was unacceptable to many orthodox Presbyterians. Likewise, the vitality that Smith taught at Princeton and which was largely responsible for the expansion of new Presbyterian-sponsored institutions of higher education was less evident at Princeton after the Smith era.

"By joining intuition to induction he was able to put forward a piety that was consonant both with Locke's epistemology and with the more traditional truths of Christianity...(his) immersion in Scottish common-sense philosophy during this most fertile stage in its development made him easily one of the most interesting educational theorists of the post-Revolutionary generation" (Cremin p. 25-26). Smith's Scottish doctrine was the pervasive influence in American colleges during the entire span of the nineteenth century. This influence not only affected the colleges but the informal networks of the educated as well.

And so it was at Princeton, which was to influence other institutions even more than itself. It was to become a system of education for dissenters, similar to that in Scotland. As a university president, Lindsley demonstrated

that he had listened closely to his former teacher. A steady stream of published essays and addresses called for a system of education for the state of Tennessee. He envisioned this system to begin with infant schools and progress through the college level with a separate set of professional schools in medicine, divinity, law, agriculture, and architecture. Such a system would have the common schools teaching not only the usual subjects in reading, writing, mathematics, geography, and history but also astronomy, mechanics, rural economics, physics, geology, chemistry, mineralogy, and botany. Likewise, the university level would teach not only the liberal arts but would place a predominant emphasis on the sciences as well. One important aspect of the Lindsley proposals is that he called for all this educational system, from the earliest common school experience through the college experience to be within the public sector. (Cremin, pp. 279-281) This general theme was one that Lindsley was not alone in following. In fact, the great educational demand of the early nineteenth century was for universal elementary schooling. Many educators, like Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, saw that a republic could not flourish with just the generally enlightened electorate; skilled social, political, and economic leadership was needed. Such a leadership would represent a natural aristocracy of virtue

and talent as opposed to the rigid aristocracy of wealth and birth.

This general tone of educational development of leaders first began as a program at the free, universal common school level. Gradually, the pursuit of the Jefferson ideal moved into the arena of secondary schools of the 1820s, particularly in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New England cities. His educational thoughts were powerful and pervasive, and the connection between education and freedom was accepted throughout the country by reform leaders as different as Henry W. Collier of Alabama, Robert Dale Owen of New York, and Horace Mann of Massachusetts. Jefferson's Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge envisaged the open opportunity to advance from the primary school through higher education at the expense of the state. However, this specific proposal directed that publicly supported education was to be earned at a private institution, William and Mary College. Later he changed his emphasis to that of a university sponsored by the state, and the University of Virginia was created, an institution which was to serve as the model American state university from its founding until 1862 when the Morrill Act was passed. Even though Jefferson had limited success in his primary school effort in Virginia, he was to become in effect the patron

saint of American popular education (Ford, 1892-1899, X, p. 4).

Lindsley agreed with Jefferson and indeed quoted him often while seemingly attempting to position the University of Nashville in the mold of the new University of Virginia. Even though he supported the making of higher education available to all who were qualified, he was less vigorous in his urging that such an opportunity be provided by a publicly-supported institution. "Great is the mistake that colleges are designed exclusively for the rich -- that none but the rich can be benefited by them -- and therefore, that the state ought not to patronize or endow them" (Halsey, I, p. 77). He preferred that state support be used to endow private institutions to achieve equal opportunity for all. "Such is the peculiar genius and excellence of our republican institutions, that, moral and mental worth is the surest passport to distinction. The humblest individual, by the diligent cultivation of his faculties, may, without the aid of family or fortune, attain the most exalted stations within the reach of gift of freemen" (Halsey, I, pp. 78-79), (Butts and Cremin, 1953, pp. 199-210).

Obviously influenced by Jefferson's experience in Virginia and in the same educational philosophy centering on equal educational opportunity for all, Lindsley called on the state of Tennessee in 1829 for regular financial support

for his university and for his "Grand Experiment," the idea of a vast system of public education in the state with a greatly expanded University of Nashville at its apex. (Brubacher and Rudy, 1976, p. 152). While a bold request from the new president, Lindsley approached the Tennessee legislators with an idea that was not completely without precedent.

Soon after the Revolution there had developed considerable popular belief that the state should bear part of the financial burden of higher education. In North Carolina this meant setting aside public lands. The first and only school chartered in the Cumberland settlements under North Carolina law was Davidson Academy which was founded in 1785. As a chartered school it had 240 acres granted it and the ferry at the foot of Broad Street in Nashville.

In 1806 Davidson Academy was reincorporated as Cumberland College which was the recipient of the Compact of 1806. This provided 100,000 acres for the benefit of two colleges, one in East Tennessee and one in the Cumberland settlements. A new institution called East Tennessee College was created in Knoxville and received, in addition to its portion of the land grant, the funds and property of Blount College. Davidson College was selected as the beneficiary in the Cumberland region and was immediately

renamed. Even with the land grant, Cumberland was to have financial problems throughout its short life. It was closed from 1816 to 1822, only three years prior to Lindsley's assuming the presidency (Folmsbee, Corlew, Mitchell, 1969, pp. 123-125, 269-281).

If Cumberland College was to greet its new president with problems, its host town seemed to thrive. "There was no doubt about it; Nashville was The Town, serving early as travel and trade center for an area of several thousand square miles. . . Nashville was not only buyer or trans-shipper for much produce from woods and farm, but source of practically all manufactured goods for those within a reasonable distance of the river" (Arnow, p. 385).

Lindsley's biographer reviews an idyllic Nashville:

It was a compact little city of some five or six thousand souls, confined pretty much to a single hill or bluff on the left bank of the Cumberland. But it was beautiful even then, set like a gem in the green casket of the surrounding hill country. It stood just at the outer apex of a long curve in the river, where, after sweeping westward, through a rich valley, and striking the elevated bluffs of stratified limestone rocks underlying the city, it flows gracefully and slowly away, in a long stretch to the north, as its waters lingerd to look upon a spot of so much beauty (Halsey, I, p. 57).

And in this paradise stood Cumberland College on a cedar-crowned hill, "not unworthy of the Athenian Acropolis, a single, plain, unpretending building, ninety feet long and three stories high" (Halsey, I, p. 58).

Regardless of what President Lindsley encountered in Nashville, he found the Denominational Era in higher education. The Great Revival had put an end, for the moment, to religion based on theology and placed the emphasis on emotion. Lindsley mentioned this circumstance in his Commencement Address of 1826: "Happily, the reign of atheism has passed away, and the fopperies of infidelity are no longer in fashion" (Halsey, I, p. 167). But the happiness was to be embraced more by other Presbyterians than by this young president of a Christian, albeit nonsectarian, institution. It was indeed the Presbyterian Church that was the most active denomination in the founding of colleges during the early decades of the century with a total of 14 Presbyterian colleges established during the first 30 years of the century (Tewksbury, 1932, p. 71). By the time of the Civil War the Presbyterians had established 49 permanent colleges in their zeal for an educated ministry (Tewksbury, p. 91).

The frontier at the time of the Great Awakening felt the Presbyterian push for educated ministers through the development of "Log Colleges." Princeton had earlier been established by the sponsors of the Log College movement and became "the mother of colleges" within the denomination.

But the Calvinist denomination was but one that would set the stage for intense competition and excessive rivalry among themselves. "Colleges came in many cases to be regarded as the agents of a type of denominational imperialism, and as a means of sectarian aggrandizement and aggression. There arose an inordinate desire for possessing the promised land. The fear of losing out in this competitive struggle for new territory led many leaders to resort to policies difficult to justify in the light of ethical principles" (Tewksbury, p. 76).

A dozen or more universities and colleges have been chartered in Ohio and Kentucky, and we have five in Tennessee. Not more than three or four in number can, in reason, be pronounced equal to good second-rate grammar schools. A few enlightened individuals have constantly aimed at higher and nobler results; but generally they have failed in their anticipations and have been thwarted in their purposes. Colleges rise like mushrooms in our luxuriant soil. They are duly lauded and puffed up for a day, and then they sink to be heard of no more. Do your wise men fancy that by the magic of a technical parchment, they can instantly convert a school or academy. . . into a college, where the liberal arts and sciences can be adequately and thoroughly taught? If so, why not transform at once every grammar school in the state into a college; and thus bring the means of a liberal education to the door of every poor man's cottage? Already Western colleges thus established, have become the objects of ridicule and contempt in every enlightened corner of the land (Halsey, p. 213).



Clearly, Lindsley realized by the time he made this statement in 1827 what the real threat was to higher education on the Cumberland and to his University of Nashville. But when he first came to Cumberland College in 1824, this competition had not fully developed. Yet, by 1827 there would be a triple coincidence which would rush American education into the West: the charter of the first American railroad, the organization of the American Home Missionary Society, and the founding of Western Reserve College (Woolverton, 1960, p. 12).

After not receiving the state financial support he requested, Lindsley looked toward alumni and other sources, none providing enough funding for his then struggling institution. A disappointing and somewhat tragic career, yes, but one of which Philip Lindsley could well have been proud; there were, for instance, 28 members of the United States House of Representatives who had graduated from his institution. And even after his death, his legacy would live on to some degree through his son, John Berrien Lindsley, first as head of the Medical School and then as chancellor of the University of Nashville. And his fight for popular education was won by his disciple Alfred Hume, who established the Nashville public school system.

Lindsley resigned from the University of Nashville in October 1850, six years after his wife, Margaret Elizabeth Lawrence, had died. In 1849 he married Mrs. Mary Ann Ayers, widow of Elias Ayers, who had founded the New Albany Theological Seminary in Indiana. Lindsley moved from the University of Nashville after 25 years as president to accept a newly established professorship at New Albany. He served there until he resigned in 1854. While attending the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Lindsley died on May 23, 1855.

His last years as president had mixed reviews. The enrollments for the 1843-1849 classes were up; an endowment of \$140,000 was established. But Dr. Gerard Troost, Lindsley's prize science professor, died in 1850 and a cholera epidemic hit Nashville in 1848 and 1849. A new campus was selected by the board, with the new location permitting the addition to the curriculum of law and medicine -- a Lindsley dream for many years. Yet, the board determined to close the university in the fall of 1850 until the new plant was ready. (Crabb, 1935, pp. 15-28)

And so it was to be that Lindsley would be remembered not for his accomplishments at the University of Nashville but for what he tried to accomplish and for what he said should be accomplished. He had grown in stature over the years as a pioneer in educational philosophy with his thesis

being that education is the rightful heritage of every human being. His words would be read and studied by historians for many years; his legacy became these words and to a much lesser degree the University of Nashville, for the liberal arts institution that Philip Lindsley knew, wished to be the basis for a more comprehensive system of higher education, and struggled with for 25 years came to an end upon his resignation. It would reopen as essentially a professional institution, would later be renamed Peabody College for Teachers, and much later be merged with Vanderbilt University.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THE LINDSLEY VISION AND THE GRAND EXPERIMENT

Philip Lindsley is so tied to the University of Nashville that the institution's history is commonly traced to his coming as president. However, he arrived almost two years before Cumberland College was to become the University of Nashville. That was not to stop Lindsley from referring rather casually in his inaugural address at Cumberland College to the institutional name he preferred.

We hope to see the day, or that our successors will see it, when, in Cumberland College, or in the University of Nashville, shall be found such an array of able professors -- such libraries and apparatus -- such cabinets or curiosities and of natural history -- such botanical gardens, astronomical observatories, and chemical laboratories, as shall ensure to the student every advantage which the oldest and noblest European institutions can boast. So that no branch of experimental or physical, of moral or political sciences -- or of ancient or modern languages and literature, shall be neglected (Halsey, I, p. 120).

If the people of Nashville did not know exactly what to expect from this young college president from the East, he may not have helped them along in that endeavor. He seemed, in these his earliest public utterances to a Tennessee audience, to be saying that what he would be attempting to accomplish at their Cumberland College was to be of

experimental nature.

The Grand Experiment is about to be made, whether this college shall be organized on a permanent and respectable basis: or whether it again be destined to a temporary existence and to ultimate failure from the want of due encouragement and patronage from the wealthy citizens of West Tennessee and the adjacent States (Halsey, I, p. 86).

But if a Grand Experiment it was to be, it seemed destined to be a difficult one. Even the proposed name change from Cumberland College (because of potential confusion with nearby Presbyterian Cumberland College) proved a difficult accomplishment and one only achieved after a long fight in the Tennessee Legislature. The trustees of Cumberland first proposed to the Tennessee Legislature the name of the University of the State of Tennessee in a "memorial" sent to the Senate on October 17, 1826, (National Banner and Nashville Whig, October 28, 1826, p. 2). This being only one month after Philip Lindsley had publicly advocated plans to expand his college and the subsequent need for \$200,000 to execute these plans, the Tennessee Legislature took note that it just might be their body that would first be approached for the funds, especially if they renamed the institution the University of the State of Tennessee. "Give Cumberland College the high sounding name asked for, and what will then be the next request?. . . Some two hundred thousand dollars has been suggested as about the sum sufficient -- and as an argument

to sustain this next request, they will say you have given us a high sounding name, and will you deny them means of sustaining the credit of the name thus conferred upon us?" (National Banner and Nashville Whig, November 25, 1826, p. 2).

The legislators then noted a pamphlet containing a commencement address by Lindsley in which he elaborated on his Grand Experiment, perhaps a bit too much.

The Trustees of Cumberland College have purchased one hundred and twenty acres of land to meet the various purposes of their contemplated university. It is proposed immediately to commence the erection of a series of buildings for the accommodation of students, instructors [sic] and stewards; consisting of five additional colleges, each sufficiently commodious for a hundred students and three assistant professors or tutors, and of seven houses for as many principal or head professors. We shall then have six colleges, and twenty-five instructors, and accommodations for six hundred pupils. To each college will be attached a refectory or boarding house, with eight or ten acres of land for gardening and exercise. The colleges will be erected at such distances from each other as to prevent the usual evils resulting from the congregation of large numbers of youth at the same place. Professors will occupy houses on the intervening lots: and there will be at least three officers resident within the walls of each college. We shall thus have six distinct and separate families, so far as regards domestic economy, internal police, and social order; while one Senatus Academicus will superintend and control the whole. . .

In order to execute our present design, only about \$200,000 will be required. This might be furnished by the state at once; or in two, four, eight or ten years. Or it may be obtained partly from donations, and partly by loan. Any individual, for instance, bestowing \$20,000 may give his name to a college or to a professorship: or any number of individuals, subscribing that sum, may give any name they please to a college or professorship. Suppose Davidson county, or even Nashville were disposed to erect a monument to the



memory of her most honoured citizen; what could she do more grateful to him, more worthy of herself, more beneficial to the republic, than to contribute the sum of \$20,000 to build an edifice, on yonder hill, to be known among all future generations as JACKSON COLLEGE, founded and endowed by the citizens of Davidson county or of Nashville, in the year ---- what year shall be designated? If the appeal were made to her generosity, her public spirit, her gratitude, her just pride and magnanimity, I cannot deem so lightly of her present citizens as to anticipate a refusal, which would prove her alike unworthy of a great University and of the Hero of New Orleans.

Let us calculate -- we have, within the limits of our city corporation alone, not less than four thousand free white inhabitants. Were each to give five dollars, or were two thousand to give each ten dollars, or were one thousand to give twenty dollars apiece, the object would be accomplished without the aid of the county at large. . . .

Let no man imagine, that, in giving money to a college, he is doling out alms to an importunate or worthless beggar. He does honour to himself by the act; and the institution honours him by accepting his bounty; and is able to confer on him and his family a greater and more durable honour than mere selfish wealth can ever procure. The otherwise obscure names of Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, Bowdin [*sic*], Williams, Brown, Bartlett, Phillips, Dickinson, Rutgers, will be immortalized by the seminaries to which they have been benefactors, and which will bear their names for ever. If honour, real honour, be worth seeking; here is the road to it. . . .

If, however, nothing can be obtained from our legislature, or from our good city or county, or from individuals, we may borrow the whole sum of two hundred thousand dollars, at an interest not exceeding six per cent -- creating a transferable six per cent stock -- and, in twenty years, we could easily pay off both principal and interest, at the present rate of charges for tuition and room-rent. It would be merely necessary, in order to procure the loan, that the state should guaranty [*sic*] the payment, or that responsible individuals should underwrite for us. And we can pledge ample means either to the state or to individuals, to secure the one or the other, from all hazard of eventual loss as I am prepared to demonstrate, at the proper time to all competent judges. Now it would be vastly preferable that the money should be gratuitously

furnished, because (to specify no other advantages) the expenses of an education of our university might be diminished one half immediately; and thus would the portals of science be opened wide to the great majority of our people.

But the funds must and will be forthcoming from some quarter. We are not to be deterred or frightened from our purpose by any obstacles, real or imaginary. We have deliberately counted the cost: and ONWARD is engraven upon our banners and upon our hearts (Lindsley, The Cause of Education in Tennessee, pp. 29-32).

If his pamphlet served him poorly in timing with the Legislature, Lindsley attempted to soften the hostility and confusion surrounding the terms "college" and "university" with this unsigned article in the Nashville newspaper.

#### College and Universities

Every institution in Europe, which confers degrees of any kind, is styled a University. No European Universities have distinct colleges under them or attached to them, except the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford in England. In the two latter, each college is a distinct incorporation, having a president, provost, principal or head of its own, with peculiar right, privileges and laws, as granted or imposed by its founder. In Scotland and on the Continent generally, the students board and lodge with private families, and not in edifices belonging to the Universities. . . In America, College and University are used as synonymous. Their charters grant them all equal powers and privileges. They may erect as many buildings, employ as many professors, and confer as many degrees as they please. Cumberland College can now do all that any University in America is authorized to do. The President and Trustees constitute the College: and the college may exist without owning a foot of land of a single edifice. Or the College that is the Corporation may erect forty buildings and call each of them a college with the same propriety as they now denominate the one edifice Cumberland College. They have not petitioned the Legislature for any new powers -- but simply for a new name -- for a name too wholly unappropriated -- and chiefly because their own name has

been assumed by a neighboring institution. They wish for a distinctive appellation, and they care not much what it is.

As soon as the laity were permitted to resort to the great ecclesiastical seminaries of Europe they began to be known as Universities: -- because all persons were admitted as students, and because all the sciences were taught in them. The Latin term for University is Academia. And this term is generally employed (in preference to Universitias) by every foreign University whenever the Latin language is used. The institution at Cambridge in Massachusetts, is styled "Harvard College or University" -- Hence in their public acts, Harvard College occurs as frequently as Harvard University. . .

Let the poor, for their consolation and encouragement, be advised of their remarkable fact, in ancient and modern times, in Europe and America, nearly all the individuals who have ever been distinguished for talent and learning have risen from among the humble and the humblest classes of the people.

The sons of rich men are seldom well educated any where. If there be any institutions on earth which may be regarded as almost exclusively beneficial to the poor, they are colleges or universities.

X

(National Banner and Nashville Whig, October 11, 1826, p. 2).

Debate continued in the Legislature as to the wisdom of changing the name and the potential of that action to imply reliance on the state treasury. Even Lindsley's admired neighbor's accomplishments worked against him in the minds of at least one legislator: "In Virginia they have a great institution, dubbed a University, and we have been repeatedly told of the great patriot by whom it has been fostered. Sir, I respect that patriot as much as any man, but in this particular I could not go with him. He has been able to draw hundreds of thousands of dollars from the

treasury of Virginia, to make a University with its sounding name. I want no such influence exercised here" (National Banner and Nashville Whig, November 18, 1826, p. 1).

After more and more discussion along these lines, the state Senate and House finally passed the name change. But only after passage in the Senate and still more debate in the House was the ordeal complete. When the name change bill came before the House for its third reading on November 24, 1826, a member attempted to table it indefinitely. That failing he proposed to substitute "Nashville" for "Tennessee" and then agreed to change again the proposed name to University of Nashville in the State of Tennessee. Later "in the state of Tennessee" was omitted, but once again there was an attempt to insert "college" rather than "university." Finally this too was rejected, and the University of Nashville became official by that name. While this was the name Lindsley had used in his inaugural address of January 12, 1825, he and the Trustees had pushed hard for the name "University of Tennessee" (Morgan, 1960, pp. 165-169). The battle may well have been partially won, but it probably was to have its losses for the next 25 years for Philip Lindsley and for the University of Nashville as he would have executed it.

The first four years, with the name change, may have been Lindsley's busiest. Things seemed to be going fairly well until 1829 when publicly asked questions were being posed regarding the future of the University. This was the year with the lowest enrollment -- 45 students -- in the administration of Lindsley, except for his first and last years in office (Morgan, 1960, pp. 261, 274).

In his 1829 baccalaureate address, the frustrated university president stated:

The crisis has now been reached, which, it may be presumed, will frighten from our ranks all the timid, irresolute and faint-hearted; but which will nerve with new vigour and energy every bold, intrepid, magnanimous spirit, and put to a decisive test the moral stamina and genuine character of every man who pretends attachment and devotion to the noblest cause which can claim his every talent and the most invincible perseverance. Should this trying crisis be successfully passed, the victory is sure -- the University will rise and triumph, and diffuse joy and blessings to thousands of the present, and to millions of future generations (Halsey, I, p. 215).

Lindsley, in the same address, had stated, "I did once flatter myself that the people of Tennessee would rally round this infant seat of science, and take a just pride in its growth and prosperity." Almost in a tone of despair he seemed to be doubting the possibility of his dream. "I did suppose that they would cherish an institution of their own -- established in their own flourishing Metropolis -- in the midst of their own peculiar manners, customs, climate, habits, and all those other nameless indescribable

somethings which constitute home. . ." He continued his assumptions, which he now seemed to question, with his hope that the University of Nashville "would command the favour and patronage of the public, because it would be their own, and not a foreign University (Halsey, I, pp. 215-216).

For whatever reason, enrollment did increase with the fall term to 51; the following summer recorded 73. But even so, rumors about the university's closing warranted the Trustees' placing an advertisement in the local newspaper disclaiming such reports. In the fall session of 1830 the enrollment soared to 90 and to 97 during the summer term. But the following year a cholera epidemic caused a reduction of students to 77 in the fall and 57 in the summer (Morgan, 1960, pp. 277, 348-349).

Not being one to hold back on his opinion, President Lindsley used the method he knew best to defend and support his university: He went to the newspapers.

Using pseudonyms for his newspaper articles, which generally somehow related to higher education in general and his university in particular, he seemed to believe in the power of the press, or at least in the influence of the printed word. In one article that was supposedly crafted by a Kentuckian visiting Nashville, he wrote to the editor of his surprise in finding such a fine university in the Tennessee city: "On the whole, I must in candour declare

that I never was before so thoroughly satisfied with any similar establishment. . ."

But the focal point of the article reveals clearly his appreciation and understanding of influencing public opinion. "My object however, in this hasty communication, is not to laud your college, but to inquire why it is so little known here at home. . . Can it be that the people are indifferent to education, or hostile to their own university? Have its patrons and friends ever taken the trouble to proclaim its merits to the people, and to excite their sympathies in its behalf?"

The contributing "Kentuckian" continues his discourse with an example of how speeches of the president of Transylvania University are reproduced in pamphlet form and carried in "every journal and newspaper, whether political, religious, literary or scientific, in Lexington, and I believe throughout the State. It was thence copied into many papers in adjacent States. . ."

He concludes with a direct appeal to the editors for more coverage of the University of Nashville. "I tell you, Mr. Editor, that Tennesseans are like the Kentuckians, their college will never assume its proper rank, until the newspaper press shall speak to all the people." Having made his point, Lindsley the "Kentuckian" ends his testimonial, not with the avowed object of the lesson, but with

characteristic praise for the institution which he led: "I now leave you, resolved to send my own sons to be educated here, in preference to any other college in the Union" (Halsey, III, pp. 631-635, citing Nashville Republican, January 12, 1832).

If Lindsley attempted to direct public opinion through such newspaper contributions with different signatures, he may also have shed light on some of the university's major problems.

In one article entitled "The Whistle," the readers learned that "Tennessee Greek is just as good as Yankee Greek." This article, to which Lindsley did acknowledge authorship, confronts Tennesseans with their propensity to send their young men away to college. "Is a youth to be educated in grand style? He must forsooth, be sent on a pilgrimage to some celebrated Athens beyond the Great Mountains. . . ." He suggests that not only is a quality education available at home but at bargain rates. "Could not our genteel people be made to believe that their sons might be educated as well in Tennessee, for example, as in Massachusetts? . . . Public opinion is omnipotent. It cannot be resisted or controlled."

He noted that approximately 500 area youth were being educated in the East "where they expend annually half a million dollars to encourage and sustain a foreign monopoly



of education; while our patriotic and economical sages never dream of adopting any measures to retain this vast amount of wealth within their own States" (Halsey, III, pp. 602-606).

This same theme is even more frankly addressed in a newspaper article under the title, "A Hint to Easterns [sic]" and signed by Tuckahoe:

It is our misfortune to live west of the mountains, where, it is taken for granted, ignorance and barbarism are destined to hold universal and perpetual sway. Pray, Mr. Editor, do tell the Philadelphians, and Bostonians and Londoners, that we are not all "ganderpullers," nor "gougers," nor "regulators," nor "half-horse and half-alligator."--That some of us geologize, and botanize, and read Greek, and talk French, and write poetry, and spout political economy-- That we receive, by every mail, loads of Scotch, English, French and Eastern periodicals of all sorts and upon all manner of subjects--scientific, literary, political, religious, miscellaneous (Halsey, III, pp. 636-638, citing Nashville Republican, January 17, 1832).

Carrying this theme still further, in an article over the signature, "G. F. G." and entitled "Nashville and the University," Lindsley defended the urban location of his university as one advantageous to students from more rural areas. After offering the usual reasons for broadened exposure to ideas and experiences in cities, he suggests that college youth often enter college "spoiled -- and the Faculty cannot cure or reform them. But, in no instance yet, has a virtuous, orderly, well-behaved youth been made worse at our institution." Continuing this thought process, G. F. G. notes that the "good have not been injured, nor are

they a whit more obnoxious to evil influences here than in any town in Connecticut or New York."

In this article which seemed to begin praising Nashville as a center of learning, Lindsley makes one of his most pointed attacks at schools in the East. Suggesting that the "good people of the Southern States generally labour under a singular delusion in regard to the benefits which their sons are supposed to enjoy at eastern seminaries," he explains that often these young men "manifest, to a most ludicrous extent, all the exclusiveness and arrogance of aristocratic clanship." Then, after their graduation and the expenditure of up to three thousand dollars per year, these boys return home "with hearts as empty as their purses -- and oftentimes with broken constitutions and dissolute habits which totally unfit them for any useful vocation or honorable profession." Students educated in Nashville, however, would look up to the "better class of citizens as models for imitation -- while at an eastern village he might look down with contempt upon the whole population" (Morgan, pp. 403-408 citing National Banner and Nashville Daily Advertiser, January 24, 1832, pp. 2-3).

To determine when the Grand Experiment came to an end would be to discern when Philip Lindsley lost his battle with his many publics, problems, competitors, and general lack of support for his educational endeavors. It could

have happened early on, when the Tennessee Legislature battled over the proposed name change. It could have been when state support was not forthcoming -- nor much of any other financial support. Or it could have been when a defensive Lindsley went to the local press under the guise of false names. The end of the beginning could have been extended until Lindsley fought against the addition of professional schools to his institution. It may well have extended until he resigned and his liberal arts institution closed.

But the mid-1830s found a prospering University of Nashville. The highest enrollment in the institution's history was in 1836 with 126 students. And even though things seemed sound, that was not to remain the case. This would eventually result in a record of the university president being reviewed not for his administrative and academic successes but for his recommendations and thematic discourses on higher education in general. Philip Lindsley knew the power of public opinion and therefore certainly knew when he was not favorably influencing that opinion. If he continued in his quest to change the tide that seemed to flow against his institution or if he forsook the goals for his Grand Experiment at some point and used the school's presidency as a rostrum for his views will be examined in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE PUBLIC LINDSLEY, AN ANALYSIS

Three themes were covered in Chapter III, themes that permeated Philip Lindsley's University of Nashville career. While certainly a part of the Lindsley strategy, these techniques evolved and could be considered just as important to his objectives and to higher education as the more traditional and overt themes that he brought to public attention. The three themes related to one another in the Lindsley methodology to the point of overlapping. Their interrelationships were crucial to his overall success or failure.

The theme of state support for private higher education, the theme of private individuals' monetary support of private nonsectarian higher education, and the theme of attempting to achieve both of these objectives through influencing public opinion are all Philip Lindsley at his best and at his worst. The fact that he attempted all three, achieved enough support to endure 25 years, and yet failed in his overall Grand Experiment revealed the dichotomy in the Lindsley Tennessee years. "And the University of Nashville did rise to a position of distinction among American universities; but Lindsley

failed. . . . Two years after his resignation the University was bankrupt and suspended operations. Despite heroic efforts he had been unable to defend the University against charges of godlessness and infidelity, or the city of Nashville against back-country charges of iniquity and aristocracy" (Borrowman, 1961, pp. 20-21).

#### Support From The Public

As demonstrated in Chapters II and III, Lindsley solicited aid from the Tennessee Legislature. This request was not without precedent. In 1806 Congress had granted Tennessee 100,000 acres of land to benefit Cumberland College and the new East Tennessee College. This action, in effect, made both institutions quasi-state universities.

Even though the University of Nashville never received much state aid, the institution did reflect many characteristics that would later characterize, via the Morrill Act of 1862, state universities. In "The False Dawn of the State Universities," Merle Borrowman lists some of the trends evident in many state universities:

1. Greater emphasis on the acquisition of secular knowledge.
2. Stress of a service function of higher education, connecting citizens with the institution.
3. Extension of educational opportunity to an ever-

expanding segment of the population as a cure for social immobility.

4. Emphasis on research with the result being a broadening of the fields of instruction.

5. Placing the monetary need for support from the public domain as an ongoing responsibility.

(Borrowman, 1961, pp. 7-10)

Upon coming to Tennessee, Lindsley stated in his 1825 Inaugural Address, "The example of Transylvania University is still nearer at hand and more prominently within your view." He referred to the achievement Horace Holley had displayed in only seven years at that institution. In a single year, 145 students from 15 states attended Transylvania, which had secured a national reputation for itself (Haunton, 1962, p. 133). Both the state of Kentucky and the city of Lexington augmented the operations of Transylvania with sizable financial grants.

Like Holley, Lindsley attempted to establish a private university with a public commitment. Accordingly, he envisaged a multi-purpose university that combined the utilitarianism of vocational and professional training with the established worth of the liberal arts. The overall service objective was to give "all young people the opportunity for social mobility and promised to become the great balance

wheel in the social and economic class struggle" (Borrowman, 1961, p. 20).

If Lindsley fulfilled the public funding portion of Borrowman's state university formula, he likewise saw the public service role of the University of Nashville as being significant. Yet, in a frontier land, the simple, self-made man was seen as being more honest than an educated one.

I am aware that some notions are prevalent in our country which perhaps do not obtain to the same extent in any other; and which may account in a small degree for this seeming anomaly. It is fashionable to think that learning is a dangerous thing in any hands, that the people can be better served without it than with it. That public offices can be more safely and advantageously filled by plain, honest men than by learned men. And hence it often happens that artful, intriguing men, without wisdom or principle, are elevated by as deceived people to stations, from which the prudent, modest, intelligent, unambitious and worthiest citizens are excluded (Halsey, II, p. 44).

He also attempted to broaden the base for higher education to "farmers and mechanics" as will be demonstrated in the democracy theme. But perhaps one of his most consistent themes was that of the danger of a sectarian college.

A public college, that is, a literary and scientific college designed for the public generally, ought to be independent of all religious sectarian bias, or tendency, or influence. And it ought, when practicable, to be situated in a town or city where the several sects, composing the body of the people, have their own places of public worship, to which their sons may have free access; and where the public eye may be constantly fixed on the conduct of the trustees and faculty; and where every artful attempt at proselytism



would be instantly detected and exposed (Halsey, I, p. 257).

That this became one of the frequent Lindsley themes was appropriate, albeit ineffective. As his institution struggled for existence as the only college within 200 miles, church-affiliated schools were created in alarming numbers, Presbyterian-sponsored colleges being the most frequent, as noted in Chapter II. As with Transylvania's Holley and South Carolina College's Thomas Copper, Presbyterians contributed greatly to the failure of this Presbyterian president's nonsectarian institution.

However, a resituated Professor Lindsley at New Albany Theological Seminary in 1851 wrote with pride in the contributions that his demonination had made to higher education. Once again a wise Lindsley tailored his remarks to the audience as he prepared for his inauguration as Professor of Biblical Archaeology and Church Government.

In our country, the Puritans of New England, who have always been as nearly Presbyterian as they dared to be without the name, and the Presbyterians of the Middle and Southern States, have been the principal, if not the sole, authors and steady supporters of schools and colleges -- and of popular education to the greatest practicable extent. Look at old Harvard, Yale, and Nassau Hall! Calvinistic Puritans and Presbyterians built them all -- as they have built many others since. Their example has stimulated other denominations to do likewise (Halsey, III, p. 434).

Chapter III displayed a Lindsley of almost bitter disposition as he pointed out the tendency of Tennessee students to attend colleges and universities in the East. Yet, he was unable to overturn this tide just as he was unable to attract private donorship to his Grand Experiment. If his goals for financial backing for the University of Nashville were not achieved, perhaps it was due to his methods of seeking support. Yet, Philip Lindsley did try, chiefly by using the local newspapers. A variety of means were adopted, including, as has been shown, numerous articles under numerous pseudonyms. This ploy was adopted early in his Tennessee career with all of the published essays written in 1831 and 1832; thereafter, Lindsley did not utilize this means of getting his message across to the public.

The remaining evidence of Lindsley going public with his educational concerns also reflects concentrated efforts in the earlier portion of his tenure at the University of Nashville. Indeed, of the 13 discourses --lectures, baccalaureate addresses, commencement speeches, and his Inaugural Address -- ten were delivered between 1825 and 1838. Between 1838 and 1848, near the end of his Nashville administration, no public addresses were rendered on the subject of education. Of the last three speeches -- 1848, 1849, and 1850 -- only one dealt directly with the usual

Lindsley topics on higher education. And this one sounded unusually low key, of generic nature, and aimed at American higher education as a whole, rather than at the University of Nashville. He did, however, mention the competition: "When this college was revised and reorganized at the close of 1824, there were no similar institutions, in actual operation, within two hundred miles of Nashville. There were none in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas, Middle or West Tennessee -- and none in Kentucky, nearer than Lexington" (Halsey, I, p. 570).

Lindsley was aware of the power of public opinion, even if he used it less in the latter portion of his career. Speaking to the Tennessee State Temperance Society in 1831, he urged public declaration and unification as the solution to "denounce the whisky drinker." He held that "distilled liquors can never be safely or innocently used, and therefore ought to be universally abandoned. . . -- as public sentiment has hitherto sustained and cherished the enormity, so public sentiment alone can put it down." Therefore, the action that should be taken, he suggested in the tone of a minister urging a public statement of faith while publicly confessing sins, was to "come forward and publicly declare their fixed unalterable purpose to abstain. . . and to prevail on others to follow their example. . . ." (Halsey, III, p. 534).

Lindsley drew an analogy of the journalistic corps with the clergy. "As the periodical press and the pulpit are calculated to exert a more powerful influence upon society, for weal or wo, than any other instrumentalities whatever, it follows, that, of all men living, ministers of the gospel and newspaper editors ought to be the most talented, and the most profoundly and extensively conversant with every species of human learning" (Halsey, I, p. 442).

He went on to state, "The editors of our daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly journals, furnish a large proportion of the reading of our people. They wield an engine therefore of the most tremendous, potent and responsible character. And if the university be needed for any one class of public instructors or functionaries rather than another, it is to furnish accomplished and erudite and trustworthy editors" (Halsey, I, p. 442).

Even in his last public speech, delivered on Commencement Day, October 2, 1850, Lindsley managed to work into this memorial to Professor Gerard Troost a comment on the significance of the press.

Newspaper editors create and destroy at pleasure. They make our rulers, and rule them when made. They manufacture public opinion and individual reputation. They are the only recognized self-appointed guardians of the people's rights and of the people's conscience. They are ex-officio judges, critics, censors, of all public officers from the President to the town constable, of all authors from Homer to Carlyle, of all

institutions and professions, of all discoveries and inventions, of all projects and enterprises. They are the arbiters of fashion, morals and manners -- of taste, art, refinement, and all the proprieties of social life. They puff theatre, church, school or college; according to the dictates of purse or conscience -- their conscience being understood to lie at the bottom of their purse. The Saturday night's inimitable bright, particular star, and the Sunday morning's graceful popular preacher, share alike their disinterested and judicious favours. They are privileged, by common consent, to write about everybody and everything -- de omni scibili, et quibusdam aliis. And their sentence of approval or reprobation is duly ratified by their grave and independent readers. Their utterances are deemed oracular, and worthy of implicit acceptation. They are popes all -- and the only living popes whose bulls are never dishonoured, -- though their bills often are! They are infallible in their judgments and edicts -- as no Roman Pontiff ever was, is, or will be. That they should dogmatize stoutly, and affirm boldly, and decide promptly, and arrogate largely -- is a matter of course. The editorial tripod is the seat of inspiration as well as of honour. And wo to the luckless wight, who shall become obnoxious to the frowns of a tribunal from which there lies no appeal.

I find no fault with this established constitutional preeminence and paramount authority or absolute supremacy of the press; or with its upright, impartial, all-knowing, dignified, conservative, accomplished and most liberal conductors. I make no complaint on this score. I concede omniscience and infallibility, however, to no other caste or clique or fraternity amongst us. And I now respectfully bespeak their seasonable and potent interposition to annihilate the claims and pretensions of all rival adventurers. Let the wordy pedant and the brainless pedagogue, the bullying empiric and smattering sciolist, and all others who profess to work miracles or to achieve impossibilities in the divine art of education, be made forthwith to know and to occupy their appropriate rank and sphere. Do this, gentlemen editors, and we will sing poems, loud and long, in your praise and to your honour. And may you live and reign a thousand years! and still find upon your banners esto perpetua as bright and cheering as at this present most auspicious deliverance (Halsey, I, pp. 611-613)!!

Even though the connection between editors and ministers had been drawn by Lindsley 29 years earlier, he chose to ignore such in his final attack on the very element that he had utilized so frequently as he attempted to mold public opinion. Perhaps he would have been happier and his career more fulfilled if the newspaper editors in Nashville had supported him in the same manner that Lexington's editors had supported Transylvania's president, Horace Holley. Even though Holley was seen as a heretic and a snob by many back-country fundamentalists, the Lexington editors greatly respected him and refused to print attacks on him (Borrowman, 1961, p. 17).

But that was not to be the experience of Philip Lindsley. The press did not work against him as much as he was unable to rally public sentiment around his cause, the University of Nashville.

#### Lindsley on Democracy

If a reason could be determined for Lindsley's attraction to the pioneer country of Tennessee, it could well have been his speculation of its being a land of the laboring class. There is much in his educational philosophy that reflects a fundamental belief in American democracy, a democracy of the ordinary citizen. According to Lindsley, the three most important useful classes of people are

mechanics, farmers, and schoolmasters. Why? If pressed for a reason, his quick reply would have been because they all three are laborers. "The great mass of the American people are, and ever must be, in the strictist sense of the term, labourers" (Halsey, III, p. 271). In cities and towns the workers are chiefly mechanics; in the rural areas, farmers. Teachers are in both locations and the fact that the three have something in common as laborers brings Lindsley to their collective plight: "What sorry creatures they are in the world's estimation!" (Halsey, III, p. 267).

The three professions, therefore, "embrace or comprehend the most ancient, the most useful and the most laborious vocations. Any plan or system devised or designed for the benefit of the real people, must have a principal reference to these; or it would be partial, imperfect and delusive" (Halsey, III, p. 273).

Having identified the "real people," Lindsley sees the role of government as "the mere creature or servant of the people -- designed solely and exclusively for their benefit. Such, at least, it is in theory -- and in the books" (Halsey, III, p. 276). And running the government for the people are, or should be, the most competent men who can be found, Lindsley would undoubtedly say. "In general, too, men who run after office. . . are most unworthy of

confidence. They ought to be repulsed; and sent home to the cornfield, or off to Texas" (Halsey, III, p. 277).

In quoting Jefferson's desire for an aristocracy of virtue and talent that was essential for a well-ordered republic, Lindsley described the genteel applicants for public office as "the veriest bores, loafers, idlers, exquisites, gamblers, blacklegs, roues, profligates, knaves, swindlers, bullies, desperadoes, braggarts, charlatans in the whole world" (Halsey, III, p. 277). And, he notes, the worst of them are the most successful. "Virtue, capacity, intelligence, wisdom, integrity, ought to be the commanding attributes of public men. . . These constitute the only right or claim which any man can justly prefer as the ground of choise either by the people or the executive" (Halsey, III, p. 283).

While much of the Lindsley message consisted of timeworn maxims, he nonetheless established a close tie of education with democracy, that is, an expression of the educational needs of the laboring class. This he accomplished in a five part address of 130 pages delivered in Nashville in 1842. Therein he explained his concept of the perfect democracy, a system where the majority govern. And this majority, he saw as being farmers and mechanics who through education would secure their rightful place as the most influential citizen leaders. Of farmers -- and he later applied the same



comments to mechanics and all the laboring classes -- he said, "I do not say that every farmer ought to go to college, or to become a proficient in Greek and Latin. I speak of them as a class: and by a liberal education, I mean such a course of intellectual discipline as will fit them to sustain the rank which they ought to hold in this Republic. They are by right the sovereigns of the land, because they constitute an overwhelming majority" (Halsey, I, pp. 224-225). That was in 1829; in 1832: "I look to a well educated independent yeomanry as the sheet anchor of the Republic. I look forward to the period when it will not be deemed anti-republican for the college graduate to follow the plough; nor a seven days's wonder for the labourer to be intellectual and to comprehend the Constitution of his country" (Halsey, I, pp. 349-350).

According to Richard Haunton, Lindsley's addresses "were ordinarily printed and widely circulated throughout the community" (Haunton, 1962, p. 138). His message to his readers was simple and direct: ". . . every American citizen is by birthright a politician: and every man of superior talents, education and influence, ought to be an enlightened politician. It is his duty then to study politics" (Halsey, I, p. 287).

And once an understanding of politics has been accomplished, the citizen has a duty to serve the country, although not a duty to seek by whatever means to govern the country. Again, he places emphasis on qualified leadership. As for a working democracy at the federal level, Lindsley recommended that the President be elected for one term only ("Let it be four years, if you please: though three or two would be better."); that the executive veto be abolished; that majorities in either the House or the Senate decide issues on a majority, not two-thirds, vote; that the President's power to appoint or remove individuals from office be greatly restricted; and that the President and Vice President be elected by popular vote, rather than by the Electoral College (Halsey, III, pp. 344-349).

If Philip Lindsley were to have had his way, the democratic system would have been restructured with an emphasis on the average citizen. But the key ingredient for this sytem to work was for this citizenry to be educated.

#### Lindsley on Slavery

If Philip Lindsley were less effective in Tennessee than he would have liked, the state had an impact on him. One such reflection of this influence was the issue of slavery. In some notes written in New Albany after 26 years in

Tennessee, the compassionate Lindsley seemed to have hardened to some degree. Halsey, noting the incongruity between writings done in Princeton prior to moving to Tennessee and those after leaving the state, suggests that the later notes are "evidently too brief and imperfect to be taken as a fair exponent of the author's opinions on the subject of which it treats" (Halsey, III, p. 574). Indeed, his biographer viewed Lindsley as a "warm friend of the African race, and a decided emancipationist, provided only that some safe and feasible method could be found."

The early Lindsley did sound an alarm at slavery. "But when will Christian charity awake to the tears and groans and cries and sufferings of the two millions of wretched Africans, who were dragged from their distant homes by Christian avarice. . . and who are here doomed, under Christian masters, to drink the bitterest cup ever presented to the lips of humanity? (Halsey, III, p. 664).

He continued: "Our slaves must be emancipated upon the soil which they cultivate. . . There is no alternative." Later, in the same essay: "The slaves, I repeat, must be free, and will be free upon the soil which they now inhabit" (Halsey, III, pp. 665, 668). The road to freedom, as suggested by Lindsley, was to give them Christian instruction. "Give the negroes the Bible, and you virtually charter their freedom" (Halsey, III, p. 666). Instead of

rendering the slaves more contentment in their lot, the Bible would inspire them with a love of liberty. "Here then is a dilemma, rather awkward, indeed, for an American philanthropist to look at. We must either keep the negroes in profound ignorance of the Bible, or, by bestowing it on them, we must contemplate their eventual emancipation. (Halsey, III, p. 666).

Lindsley acknowledged that his antislavery comments were "pronounced in a corner -- where, if they do no good, they can do no harm. I should not have spoken thus in a slave-holding State. Prudence, benevolence, would have forbid it." But then, as if expecting a less receptive congregation in his then-future home of Tennessee, he added: "When I shall have pitched my tent among the wretched sufferers beyond the mountains, I shall humbly look to Heaven for direction as to the line of conduct which duty may require me to pursue" (Halsey, III, p. 668).

After spending the next 26 years in Tennessee, the then ex-president's views seemed altered. In his New Albany notes, Lindsley wrote in an outline format as if preparing for a speech. Some highlights:

--"Slavery countenanced and regulated by law among the Hebrews. By Moses, etc. By Paul, etc."

--"The African at home and in America. Actual condition of the negroes in Africa at the period when first transported as slaves to America. Their conditon since, and at present, -- not worse certainly than before, and in their native land. . . War, death, slavery -- ever in prospect -- at home. . . Are the negroes, at this moment, anywhere in the United States, as badly off as are their heathen kindred in Africa?"

--"The great design of Providence in causing or permitting their removal to America. History. Prophecy. How great changes or events are usually brought about. The negro had so far degenerated, had become so extremely debased, that a long course of discipline and apprenticeship was necessary to restore him to his primeval dignity and mankind."

--"No man is required by law to own a slave, not even in the slave States."

--"Consider the multitude of negroes converted to the Christian faith while in bondage, etc."

--"The white race more damaged by slavery than the black."

--"Slavery recognized in the Decalogue. See fourth commandment."

--"Even while in slavery, the negro fares better, in all respects, than his brethren in Africa -- both as to this life and the future."

--"Free States are beginning to exclude negroes from their territory -- as Indiana, etc."

--"What will soon be the condition of free negroes in this country? What, if all were free? Is it possible for the negro here ever to become the equal of the white man -- socially or politically?"

--"Distinguish between the legitimate tendency and influence of Christianity towards the gradual amelioration of humanity and the actual state of mankind in the time of Christ, and ever since. The evils of slavery to be abated or exterminated -- like those of intemperance, war, ignorance, oppression and injustice of every kind."

--"Hitherto, and the present, the negroes have been, and are, better off in a state of slavery than in a state of freedom. While ignorant, feeble, degraded; they need protection and instruction. They would soon perish out of the land, if set free, and left to take care of themselves" (Halsey, III, pp. 576-583).

## Selling Higher Education

It has been demonstrated that Philip Lindsley attempted to gather support for higher education, both from the treasury of the State of Tennessee and from the private citizenry. He also had another job -- to convince the public of the value of education in the first instance. He had attempted such as a road to an informed and intelligent electorate in a workable democracy. He had attempted such as a way that black slaves would secure their future freedom (by studying the Bible). He had attempted, too, to argue his case by positioning his statements to the audience he saw as dominating the majority of the Tennessee population: farmers and mechanics. And, finally, he praised the value of education by praising the value of the schoolmasters.

It was this latter ploy that revealed the significant challenge to the determined university president. By isolating the public contribution of school teachers, he addressed the real obstacle to the success of his university. Not only did it not have the sponsorship of a church, it lacked the commitment of any organized body. And as he attempted to rally the state government and the general public, he was, in essence, attempting to organize a constituency. This support group would have been an education-hungry citizenry all attending, giving to, and urging state donations for the University of Nashville.

To state that such a constituency never materialized would be understating the situation. For not only was little support forthcoming, but the very foundation for such was lacking. President Lindsley had gone to a rural state inhabited with rural people with rural values. If the worth of classical college studies seemed at best an indirect route to success, the worth of education on any level was the more fundamental question presented by the public.

It is unclear if this reality were a surprise to the new president, but he chose to address the issue -- as well as the corresponding theme of support for higher education -- in his Inaugural Address, January 12, 1825. He had been in Tennessee all of 18 days at the time of the speech. If his words sound to today's ear slightly platitudinous, it is well to recall the lonely existence of the then-Cumberland College in the vast area of Middle Tennessee. His words fell on few educated ears or on ears that even valued education, particularly as a means to a viable career. Nonetheless, they listened, presumedly, and heard:

--"If the people would retain in their own hands that power which the Constitution gives them, they must acquire that knowledge which is essential to its safekeeping and rightful exercise."

--"Give the people knowledge, therefore, and you give them power."



--"In every country on the globe where the mass of the people are best instructed will be found the most liberty, the most virtue, and the most happiness."

--"No greater foe to his country's dearest interests can be found than the enemy of education."

--"Wherever education declines, there human nature proportionally deteriorates."

--"Ignorance, it is well known, is the parent of superstition and of oppression." (Halsey, I, pp. 65-75)

In this his first address before the people of Tennessee, Lindsley tried to disspell the notion that colleges are meant only for the rich. "Nothing can be more groundless and fallacious than such a representation; no course more injurious to the people were it adopted." If, he suggested, no local college existed, the rich would natually send their children away to school. Then this educated minority would return to Tennessee "to monopolize all the liberal professions and all the avenues to wealth and honor in the commonwealth." But with colleges at home, everyone could attend and thereafter "enter the lists of honorable competition with the richest (Halsey, I, pp. 77-78).

If the listening audience was not convinced that a local college education was the key to freedom and to material wealth, Lindsley coupled his product with one of a more

recognizable nature. By emphasizing the need for more public primary schools, he stated that the route toward achieving that goal was first to train more teachers. Then the primary school "would grow up of course and from necessity" (Halsey, I, p. 80).

Then follows one of the basic Lindsley themes, a theme that prevades every other educational philosophy that he proposed. This is the idea that a result is based upon an action and upon acceptance of the reality of the need for the action, itself based upon the assumed perception that the result is needed. "As education extends, the desire and demand for it increase" (Halsey I, p. 80).

In the particular illustration of this accepted multiplier effect, he explained that the "gradual supply to the community of persons qualified and willing to instruct, and the constantly increasing thirst for knowledge among the people, will react upon each other -- the latter making room and giving employment to the former" (Halsey, I, p. 80).

Once teachers are trained and schools develop out of the availability of qualified instruction, benefits to the community are evidenced, Lindsley explained. The number of working laborers would not diminish, but the conditions in which they worked would eventually be improved through education. And even though everyone would not be educated to the same degree, everyone would be educated, thereby

raising the standards of all. Still, there would be rewards for the better educated, who would become leaders in the community by virtue of their superior education. But, he suggested, the poor when educated would become more industrious, useful and happy in the same proportion as the rich when educated.

So, it seemed to Philip Lindsley that what Tennessee needed was a vastly expanded University of Nashville. Once the development of this institution began, it would trigger correction of many other ills confronting Tennessee society with the corresponding evaluation being placed more on the success of the success than on the cause and effect relationship (the University of Nashville educating the people).

#### The Public Lindsley, A Summary

Philip Lindsley could be viewed as a man who gave expression to education, for it was education that dominated his life and around it he built a mythology of the human experience. His interpretation of this experience was adequate for him and for his feeling about the human condition in general. He did not dispute the underlying assumptions of acceptable educational philosophies: namely, that they be for the people, be nonbourgeois, and represent an historical inevitability that ultimately the public would

decide what was best for the public. For him, a theme of particularism was pervasive; what was good for the individual as structured by Lindsley was thought to be good for the people as a whole. He seemed never to abstain from the belief that he had the answers for higher education in the West and that his institution offered the opportunity to deliver those solutions and absolve the sins of ignorance and mental laziness.

That he could have presented some new alternatives is not so much at issue as his choice of location and the atmosphere evident in that locale. Lindsley had gone west to be an educator and an educational leader and orator. Yet, he had not chosen to become of the West. Instead, he remained an easterner who from a western pulpit critized eastern higher education. But it was nonetheless adequate enough in his mind to serve as an ever-present threat to his institution's security. And it served, too, as a standard against which he would bounce his own progress and situation. He associated with the East insofar as he achieved a notoriety that the East accords to success. But he fashioned his attempts at success in the West. Lindsley's misunderstanding of the irony of his situation colored the very terms on which he was accorded the opportunity to succeed. In attempting to outline his goals, he misjudged the criteria which would establish the

worthwhileness of the venture. Accordingly, the more frequent and expressive the statement of his concept for the University of Nashville, the more ground he lost in acquiring the necessary foundations of support. If Lindsley the man was admired in many Nashville circles, Lindsley the educational philosopher was misunderstood or largely ignored. His defensiveness built upon itself with an ultimate course chartered for failure for his institution, the laboratory for his experiment.

Lindsley set for himself a task, which produced a many-pronged problem. Yet, he approached the challenge as one of limited themes of focus. The attempt to draw these various aspects together in a single whole, the University of Nashville, was not to be realized. The Lindsley approach to recognizing and rectifying the public perception of his institution's troubled image began not with the projection of a positive image but with the defense of a negative. He carried forth less a theme for the school than a body of perceptions to which he must respond.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The process used in examining the themes of Philip Lindsley's Nashville career was drawn from a number of sources. Several approaches were combined to look at the institution and at its chief source of direction. In examining the institution, the analysis was undertaken to focus on its prime mover, Philip Lindsley. And in examining Lindsley, the emphasis was placed on his publicly held philosophies on higher education and on the University of Nashville as a vehicle to execute those philosophies.

Lindsley is an intriguing and important historical figure in higher education because he represents a dramatic and memorable exception to the pattern of organizational behavior associated with the notion of institutional saga. Sociologist Burton R. Clark's classic work, The Distinctive College, brings attention to one model of organizational development: a nondescript or floundering campus hires a charismatic new president whose ability to infuse faculty, students, alumni, and external publics with a vision of institutional transformation -- from invisibility to distinction and academic excellence. Clark, for example, cites the case of Frank Aydelotte at Swarthmore College. In

the 1920s and 1930s a struggling Quaker-affiliated small college in Pennsylvania gained national and international prominence when its new president brought with him a plan for an "American Oxford" using the elements of an honors program, tutorials, and senior seminars transplanted from his own Rhodes Scholarship experience to the American campus.

Lindsley appears to follow this pattern almost a century before Aydelotte at Swarthmore and Arthur Morgan at Antioch College. Yet, the curious and important switch is that the saga -- the legendary and heroic image and memory -- follows the president, not the organization.

Drawing on the writings of Talcott Parsons and Philip Selznick, John Corson suggests in Governance of Colleges and Universities that the character of an institution is formulated by a course of adapting to both internal and external pressures. "The sum total of the factors mentioned is the institutionalized value system of trustees, president, deans, department heads, and faculty" (Corson, 1960, p. 179). These value systems, when combined with the internal/external pressures, form the institutional character; the chief purveyor to the various publics of the institution is usually the president.



The idea of institutional character is further defined by Clark and by John Thelin. We learn of organizational saga and of historic personality, each examining the ingredients and formulation of the institutional character. This character is perpetuated through a strong self-fulfilling belief that becomes workable through institutional self-image and through its public image. After a while the successful perception or icon becomes accepted as the fact, often separate from the truth of the original institution or representative spokesman.

Beginning at the turn of the century, colleges cultivated their public images through carefully crafted publicity campaigns. In so doing instant reputations were oftentimes created wherein young institutions took on the vestiges of their older, more established neighbors. But in the early to mid-nineteenth century, it was the public spokesman or president who molded public opinion.

Daniel Boorstin describes an image as a pseudo-ideal. As such it is "synthetic, believable, passive, vivid, simplified, and ambiguous" (Boorstin, 1962, pp. 185-193):

1. Synthetic "It is planned: created especially to serve a purpose, to make a certain kind of impression."

2. Believable ". . . if an image is to be vivid and to succeed popularly in overshadowing its original, it must not outrage the ordinary rules of common sense."

3. Passive "In the beginning the image is a likeness of the corporation; finally the corporation becomes a likeness of the image. . . . Because an image is essentially passive, it need have very little to do with the activities of the corporation itself."

4. Vivid and concrete "The image is limited. It must be more graspable than any specific list of objectives."

5. Simplified ". . . an image must be simpler than the object it represents."

6. Ambiguous "It floats somewhere between the imagination and the senses, between expectation and reality."

Boorstin suggests that prior to the Graphics Revolution, thinking was more along the lines of ideals than images. "The image is made to order, tailored to us. An ideal, on the other hand, has a claim on us. It does not serve us; we serve it. If we have trouble striving toward it, we assume the matter is with us, and not with the ideal" (Boorstin, 1962, p. 198).

Philip Lindsley dealt with ideals, but he created an image for himself as the messenger of those ideals. He failed to create the image of the University of Nashville as the site for the implementation of those ideals. The institutional personality or the organizational saga was incomplete. Without an adequate projection for a viable

outlet for his ideals, his image as a spokesman was not believable nor focused enough to be simply packaged.

While it cannot be determined if Lindsley wanted greatness for himself or success for his institution (or both), he lived in an age when public recognition or fame did not necessarily lead to greatness; in fact, greatness usually led to fame. "The past became the natural habitat of great men. The universal lament of aging men in all epochs, then, is that greatness has become obsolete" (Boorstin, 1962, p. 46). Had there been created through the University of Nashville pamphlets or through the Nashville newspapers a Philip Lindsley, great in educational ideals, he might have succeeded in becoming a hero. As it was, he was less than that and was so in an age when that status served up less than a full measure of the prerequisite of greatness. Were he alive today, perhaps the strived for hero status could be achieved through celebrity status, which can more easily be fabricated than can greatness. But were there not people during the Lindsley era who had achieved greatness without the accompanying notoriety? Probably not, for to acquire public recognition, there had to be either an accepted instance of achievement or at least the perception of achievement. And there were few effective tools to create the perception without the happening of the event.

A related analysis of the public Lindsley was drawn against those criteria necessary for the existence of an icon. While not viewed in the usual sense of religious emblems, these cultural ciphers or admired artifacts -- tangible or intangible -- assist the public in deciphering attitudes and assumptions. As objects they are approached objectively; as emotions they reflect a level of love, of respect, of reverence.

The Greek root, eikon, means image. Perhaps a more specific and usable definition is offered by Marshall Fishwick: "the craving for external expressions of internal convictions" (Fishwick, 1978, p. 3). "Icons are symbols and mindmarks. They tie in with myth, legend, values, idols, aspirations. . . . The old process continues: history becomes mythology, mythology begets ritual, ritual demands icons. Concepts end up as creeds and icons" (Fishwick, 1978, pp. 4-5).

In his pioneering 1939 work, Studies in Iconology, Erwin Panofsky addresses icons as the relationship between the subject matter of meaning (of art works) and their form. With this association of distinguishing between meaning and form, icons can be viewed on many levels and with many compatible words: "cipher, symbol, artifact, emblem, amulet, totem, allegory, charm, idol, image" (Fishwick, 1978, p. 5). As icons develop, their language evolves along

with them in the form of legends, beliefs, veneration. And, like Boorstin's pseudo-ideal, the icon and its language demand a cult for full expression.

But before an icon can secure the following of a loyal cult, it must develop the form aspect of Panofsky's form/meaning equation. It is this form that serves as the process for delivering on the other ingredients that create and support the ideal, the saga, the historic personality, the image. This delivery system is the essence of image-making and successful leadership. Where institutions, roles, persons, or symbols are perceived to be infused with transcendent powers, they are said to be charismatic.

According to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, charisma is "the quality which is imputed to persons, actions, roles, institutions, symbols, and material objects because of their presumed connection with ultimate, fundamental, vital order-determining powers" (Sills, 1968, II, p. 386). The influence of individuals who "experience" charisma directly is called charismatic authority, with these people being creators of new order as well as breakers of the established routine order. Since charisma places its bearer in the position of being believed to have contact with that which is vital and powerful, the charismatic person is necessarily authoritative.

Charisma is seen as a form of power by at least one current scholar, but in using the term he equates it with trust in leadership. And of the three elements of trust, James Fisher stresses distance over style and perceived self-confidence. Accordingly, he states that trust is enhanced by remoteness rather than by intimacy. "Do not be hesitant to dismiss or reassign someone who persists in closing the distance" (Fisher, 1984, p. 77).

In his present-day manual for university presidents, Fisher stresses the importance of the articulation of the president's special vision, mission, or cause for the institution. Without this the president will not be viewed as a true leader. "A mission is grand and all-embracing, and includes lofty, humanistic concepts like peace, progress, freedom, and the welfare of the community and greater public as well as the specific mission for the university" (Fisher, 1984, pp. 57-58).

In another recommendation to presidents he urges, "Remember, this is the time to dream." Once the dream has been documented and publicly verbalized, Fisher says that a legend or myth will grow around the president. "The myth, of course, will be bigger than the real people or institution; the myth can grow so long as the president does not take it seriously or accept it as fact" (Fisher, 1984, p. 60). The fabric of the myth then becomes the public's

perception that the president can lead and influence, thereby mirroring their own dreams and aspirations.

The major factor in developing the presidential aura of charisma is the president's off-campus image, according to Fisher. Like icons and pseudo-ideals, this external image builds upon itself. If the public's impression is that the president is well received by the general public, this will set the stage for acceptance within the institution and by other external groups. "For even the most experienced, important, sophisticated people make judgments based on how many people admire an individual" (Fisher, 1984, p. 145).

No matter what the concept used for analysis, there is much similarity in both the stages of the process of acquiring a projected image and the necessary ingredients used in preserving that image.

Philip Lindsley was a public figure and accordingly had an image before the publics he addressed. While the content of his message was often thought provoking, if not controversial, the manner in which he presented his ideals was insufficient to secure the end results to his liking.

While already addressed in Chapters II, III, and IV, a brief review of the answers to the questions posed in Chapter I is undertaken.

1. Given that educational historians refer to Lindsley's published papers as the primary source of his educational philosophies, how did he influence his standing in history by selecting what would become the only readily available resource to his educational contribution while providing scant mention of the impact of these ideals?

Lindsley, no matter what his intention, did little to convince historians of his success at the University of Nashville. In fact, except for the early years, few specific plans were offered that would carry out his Grand Experiment. He was destined to fight for survival at his adopted institution and in the end even lost support of the board. It was this inability to sway public opinion that limited the effectiveness of the president who saw himself as having an answer for the average Tennessean. Yet, he spent 25 years attempting to influence those very people.

2. Given the range of the Lindsley educational concerns, did he serve more as an educational spokesman than as an educational leader?

Lindsley was very much the advocate of educational reform. Colleges training teachers who would teach in public schools, development of a more practical college curriculum in addition to liberal studies, state support for higher education, and private donorship and patronage for local higher education were frequent Lindsley themes. It is



largely this series of proposals for which he is remembered as an educational leader. In a sense, his public oratory became the substance of leadership because of the nature and breadth of his educational themes and recommendations. Therefore, he was a spokesman, and through his message he became a recognized leader on a conceptual plane. But as an administrative leader implementing his own proposals at his own institution, he met with limited success.

3. Which of his views were implemented with reasonable success at the University of Nashville?

Lindsley was able to turn a college into a university as Cumberland College's name did change to the University of Nashville, and it did so with the consent of the Tennessee Legislature -- but not without long and heated debate.

He did achieve some public support for his private institution through the series of public land grants dedicated to his institution.

Likewise, he secured enough private financial backing to keep the doors open for 25 years, something that could not have happened with tuition fees alone but still represented no significant acquisition of specific and substantive support.

In his exhaustive theme of associating education with democracy, with the intended beneficiary of such being the average citizen -- the farmer and the mechanic -- he was

more successful at changing his own institution's curriculum than with any overwhelming acceptance and understanding on behalf of the public. As he saw most potential University of Nashville students being inadequately educated and having limited interest in the classics, he geared the curriculum to include the usual liberal education but also to be directed to scientific and other practical subjects.

4. How have historians treated the man and his philosophies apart from the University of Nashville's successes and failures?

Indeed, most historians largely ignore the institution other than it serving as a basis from which Lindsley was president. Generally, the man is handled with care by historians. They focus on the content of his Grand Experiment and the many themes he introduced at that early point in his Nashville career; they ignore his limited successes within the Experiment as if to suggest that to do other than fail would have been impossible at that time, at that place. It seems, then, that historians have placed Philip Lindsley in the role of spokesman for higher education, even though his themes were often directed only at the University of Nashville, though sometimes they were more universal. But even when they were appearing generic and universal in scope, his intended result was to benefit his individual school. But if his theme of particularism

was valid, then what was good for the University of Nashville could well have been good for higher education as a whole. But as little was permanently secured in the way of success at Nashville, then there can be few parallels drawn for the whole of education.

Most references to Lindsley come from only three of his public addresses: the Inaugural Address, the 1829 Baccalaureate Address, and the 1837 Commencement Address.

5. After the failure of the "Grand Experiment," did the tone of the Lindsley message continue in the same manner?

There is no specific point at which the Grand Experiment failed; in fact, there is little to suggest that it ever had tangible beginnings other than in the mind and discourses of its creator. As noted in Chapter IV, the frequency of the Lindsley discourses and other published articles waned considerably during the last half of his Nashville career. If the tone softened during the late speeches and the late newspaper editorials, it never completely moved away from the plight of his institution and its competition.

6. What indication, if any, does Lindsley offer of acceptance of any of his recommendations and pleas for support?

There is little public acknowledgement by Lindsley that he felt he was successful in gaining enough support for the University of Nashville or that his general message of

"education is the key to success" was accepted by the public. His attacks on the press indicated that by the end of his years in Tennessee he felt his message had not been received by the reading public. While he chose to place the responsibility for this with newspaper editors, he nonetheless seemed to be acknowledging his inability to rally public sentiment around his cause.

7. Has a level of prominence been accorded this man that is not established even in his own papers?

As he is rarely evaluated in terms of his achievements or failures at the University of Nashville but instead on his ability to speak in a public forum on education, the level of prominence is based on concepts and philosophies, not on successes. As his papers, and particularly several addresses in the first half of his 25 year career, provide the basis for according him prominence, there is consistency.

8. Is there any indication that Lindsley attempted to stage his public discourses in such a manner as to reinforce his meaning by repetitious bombardment of the public with ideas encapsulated in a consistent form so as to give an after-life to his ideals?

There is no discernible evidence that Lindsley was unusually concerned with his own historical evaluation. And even though he did repeatedly push several familiar themes

to the Lindsley listeners, these themes generally had less to do with his record in history than with the immediate problems confronting his institution. Most frequently these concerns were, in one form or another, financial worries for the University of Nashville. Therefore with so many pressing concerns on the immediate horizon, he could afford little time charting the course for his perpetual image for future generations.

But Lindsley was aware of the importance of history and the role it played with all generations, as well as the significance of historical interpretation. "But in spite of human mendacity and liability to error, we are obliged to confide in testimony; or to abide in ignorance of all events and things which we cannot witness or investigate personally, or for ourselves. What do we, what could we know of history or geography, of past ages or remote countries, except by and through the testimony of others? (Halsey, II, pp. 676-677).

In another discourse, Lindsley said, "The great masses of mankind have, at all times, been controlled and directed and fashioned by the wisdom or the cunning or the will of the few. And it is the character of the few which invariably fixes the historic character of every age and of every country" (Halsey, III, p. 134).

9. In making his public addresses, did Lindsley fail to present himself as a safe and trusted figure linked to a comfortable, sound past leading toward an unthreatening future?

As noted in Chapter IV, Lindsley found it difficult to rally support for his cause. He had gone west but called on eastern standards even as he critized eastern education and the lure it possessed for many students from the West. Even as he addressed Tennesseans on the state of poverty, he assured them of the road to flee that condition: education. And as these laboring farmers and mechanics -- as Lindsley was prone to label the majority of citizens in Tennessee -- listened, they heard the university president once again drawing comparisons with the land east of the mountains: "Visit any Eastern college, and you will find nearly all the industrious successful students belonging to the middling and poorer classes" (Halsey, I. p. 231). He noted that the learned professions, too, were composed of people from the humblest walks of life. Why and how? Because the poor went to college and, being accustomed to hard work, became studious college lads who advanced in their careers after graduation.

Lindsley supposed there were some 5,000 rich Tennessee familes. If any of them listened, they heard their student offsping described as spending their time in "mad frolics

and ruinous dissipation" and their money wasted on tuition in eastern seminaries. And if the poor listened, they heard that they should attend the local financially burdened university, become schoolmasters while preparing for their careers, and then forsake the backgrounds they knew best. Once accepted into his formula for success, the listeners were then presented with Lindsley the preacher who tied all this success via education to Christianity.

Lindsley represented the sound eastern standards that so attracted the few rich and some of the ambitious poor. Yet, he did so as he attempted to cultivate those same values in a rural state with two struggling institutions that did not equate with the perceived value of attending college in the East.

10. Was there any point in his public addresses wherein his emphasis seemed to change from the University of Nashville to the perpetuation of his own image via his educational philosophies?

Lindsley was consistent in his published essays and public addresses in that he was always fighting for the University of Nashville. Most often this plug for support came in the midst of broader issues, but oftentimes these issues served as frontloading cultivation for his institution.

PHILIP LINDSLEY died in 1855, five years after his resignation from the University of Nashville. The Tennessee Legislature attended the funeral as a group and issued a resolution to that effect. Many published tributes recalled Lindsley the educator -- one by Dr. Van Rensselaer seemed to summarize the career of Philip Lindsley: "He accepted the presidency of the University of Nashville in 1824, and for a quarter of a century devoted his life to the institution" (Halsey, III, p. 76). Yet, his perceived contribution to higher education was to project a broad image of what the great American university might be -- rather than to develop his own institution as a laboratory for his educational ideals.

The great American university president preceded the great American university.



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Vita

David Mathis

Birthdate: July 11, 1947

Birthplace: Humboldt, Tennessee

Education:

- 1979-1985 The College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study  
Doctor of Education
- 1965-1971 Middle Tennessee State University  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
Bachelor of Science  
Master of Arts

IMAGE, INSTITUTION, AND LEADERSHIP: PHILIP LINDSLEY AND THE  
MODERN UNIVERSITY PRESIDENCY, 1825-1850.

David Mathis, Ed.D.

The College of William and Mary, December 1985

Chairman: Dr. John R. Thelin

Colleges and universities have historically found that their projected image, character, prestige, and reputation is highly significant to success, even though these illusive indicators of quality may be little more than emotional responses to what people believe, rather than reality. These over-simplifications are based on filtered messages and perceptions, and when they occur, a Gestalt view results that relates to the institution as a whole. One avenue often utilized by institutions of higher education to achieve this institutional image or character is through the president or major spokesman.

One important historic case of the spokesman's role in higher education is that of Philip B. Lindsley, educator and Presbyterian clergyman, who served as president of the University of Nashville from 1825 to 1850. He is, in effect, the nineteenth century precursor of the twentieth century university president. While involved in all aspects of his small and struggling institution, he devoted much of his time and energy addressing the external affairs of the university. He solicited monetary support both from individual citizens of Nashville and from the

State of Tennessee for his private nonsectarian institution. He was keenly aware of the power of the press in influencing public policy just as he understood that higher education is not an isolated entity, but instead, one that must fit within the overall needs of society -- economically, socially, educationally (at all levels of lower public education), and morally.

The Lindsley of nineteenth century Nashville stood in dramatic relief to most college presidents of the time. But his legacy was not to be in his own university, which closed shortly after his resignation in 1850. Instead, the significance of Philip Lindsley would be in the themes he addressed, through public speeches and published papers, regarding the direction of higher education in Tennessee and beyond.

In this frontier environment, where the impossible was thought only slightly less attainable than the difficult, Philip Lindsley confused the visionary with the real and turned his dreams into illusions. Herein lies his importance as a "type" and "role" for the American college president.

His professional inscription stands separate from the University of Nashville. He became a symbol of educational leadership through the celebration of his philosophies and creeds. After a while and with his repeated oratory, Philip Lindsley's reputation gained increased acceptance merely because of his recognition. Image and institution ceased to be one.